

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

her of traditionally pro-British Bakhtiari chieftains. German consuls and commercial agents in southern Iran co-operated with him. In fact, even before his arrival Wonckhaus had made an abortive attempt to blow up British oil installations in Abadan and Basra. Wassmuss, leading a force of tribal warriors, attacked Bushire and immobilized in this port British Resident Sir Percy Cox and a force of eight hundred Indian troops. Aided by Consul Wiistrow in Shiraz, Wassmuss entered that city and there captured the British consul together with the manager of the Imperial Bank of Iran and fourteen other British subjects. He later kept them as hostages in the clay fortress of Ahram in southern Fars. The British, in order to protect their oil fields and pipe lines in Khuzistan, were compelled to dispatch forces to southern Iran. The result was a considerable weakening of their offensive in Mesopotamia, and in April, 1916, General Townshend and his twelve thousand troops had to surrender to the Turks at Kut el-Amara.<sup>4</sup>

The expeditions led by Zugmaycr and Niedermaycr operated in northern Iran and were actively supported by German consuls in Kermanshah and Hamadan. Like Wassmuss, these agents managed to win over to their cause some tribes. They were particularly successful among the Kurds, who, as followers of the Sunni sect, co-operated with the Turks and their allies. Niedermaycr's mission was not limited to Iran. He was instructed to proceed to Afghanistan and to extend his activities there to the gates of India. After a dangerous and arduous journey Niedermaycr reached Kabul and tried to induce Emir Habibullah to side with Germany. But the Emir was non-

committal, and, reluctantly, Niedermayer was forced to leave the country. Nevertheless his companions von Hentig and Rohr remained in Afghanistan for some time, reaching the Pamir Plateau and Hindu Kush. There they rallied around them numerous German and Austrian prisoners of war who had escaped from Russia. Although both of them had to leave Afghanistan in due time, their efforts were revived toward the end of the war when the Kaiserliche and Konigliche Ost-Indische Abteilung was formed in that country. While all these diversionary activities were taking place, the

\* For detailed description see Christopher Sykes, *Wassmuss, the Persian Lawrence* (London, 1936).